

slowdown by Val-Creative

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Friendship, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., J. Hopper, Joyce B., Will B.

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Summary: Will helps El realize the disappearance of her powers is psychological. Once she gets past it, El is able to find Hopper's location and that he's alive.

slowdown

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El has never so much open, blue sky before. Even in Hawkins. Cedars and pine trees, and buildings, sheltered her.

She's been living in the countryside with the Byers family for several weeks, getting accustomed to home schooling with Joyce. They didn't have to take her in. Joyce talks patiently with her. When they're not together, El wanders out to the farming fields, spending the last hours of daylight exploring and contemplating whether or not to bother Mike and the rest of her friends.

"C'mon..."

A gigantic, round bale towers over her. Nobody around for miles.

El stretches out her hands, grunting, turning red from the effort. She pushes, and pushes, as hard as El can with her mind. To nudge the hay even a millimeter.

"Come on!" El yells, her brown eyes shutting—

—*tentaclewindingaroundherlegEl'sskinrippingopengushingTheMindFlayer*
—

—she yells, high-pitched, lurching onto the dirt.

"Nnnh!" El grips onto her left leg, feeling searing hot pain, writhing.
"Ahh!"

She tugs up her denim jean in a hurry find the old, deep scars. No bloody wounds or oozing. El's nostrils clean. Sweat pours down the back of El's neck.

It'll never work. She's powerless.

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Twilight peeks over the horizon. El makes it back to the road, trudging ahead. Her overalls caked in soil.

She spots Jonathan getting into his car, backing up, at the same time Will hitches himself onto his bike. El's own shrieking gasp rings in her eardrums.

Jonathan's car freezes millimeters from striking Will's hip, and Joyce screams, running through the rubber-smelling smoke, hugging her youngest. Jonathan scrambles out, apologizing, and then they stare at El's outstretched hand.

El stares back at them all, wide-eyed, her right nostril gushing blood.

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"Hey..."

El makes a frustrated noise on the porch, turning away. The empty water bottle remains uncrushed.

"Why can't I do it?" she mumbles.

"You're scared," Will tells her, sitting down beside her. He shrugs at El's look. "You're scared because you think your leg is gonna hurt again. And you don't wanna be in pain." She remembers the first time it happened-how El writhed and vomited to the rug, how terrified Will seemed while cradling her head. "But did your leg hurt when you stopped Jonathan's car?"

"No."

"Then maybe it's all in your head, El." Will points to the nearby batter-operated radio, before helpfully switching it on. "Every time you think it's gonna hurt, you stop using your powers. What happens if you don't stop?"

He's encouraging this, and El trusts him.

She uses her neck-bandanna and concentrates on the static, imagining blackness and El's sneakers wadding in. And then it's real. El circles herself, astonished, and then glimpses a bearded, tired man in a cell. His expression mirthful. He's taunting a Russian guard, receiving a wallop to the face, but laughs again. El's stomach twists.

"Hopper..."

She bursts out crying, tearing off the bandanna and feeling Will's palm resting on her knee. It's not despair coursing through El.

Not anymore.

Her dad is *alive*. And El will get him out.

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Stranger Things isn't mine. Requested by TorontoBatFan (FFN): "El learns her issues with her powers are psychological. Once she gets past it, she's able to find Hopper in the Void and learns he's alive." I actually loved this one! Thank you! And I hope you guys love it too! Any thoughts/comments are super appreciated!

((Want a request for Stranger Things? I'm doing 100-500 word drabbles of any friendship or romantic ship + any prompt until I feel like quitting. Rules: you need to comment here and provide a friendship or romantic ship and prompt. Please do not ask for anything with Billy Hargrove. Thank you. The only requests I'll be looking at is if you ALSO commented about the fic you just read as well. It's only fair. You came to this fic to read it and me doing something for you later on is a sweet bonus!))